

Psalms 96:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Analysis

Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. This verse describes the visible manifestation of God's presence in four paired attributes. "Honour and majesty" (hod ve-hadar, הָדָה וְהָדָר) are royal terms describing splendor, glory, and majestic dignity. Hod (חָדָה) conveys radiant splendor; hadar (חָדָר) suggests ornamental beauty and magnificence. These qualities are "before him" (lephanav, לְפָנָיו), in His presence—God's glory radiates from His being.

"Strength and beauty" (oz ve-tiph'eret, עֹז וְתִפְאָרֶת) are parallel attributes. Oz (עֹז) means might, power, and fortitude—God's invincible strength. Tiph'eret (תִּפְאָרֶת) means beauty, glory, or splendor—not merely aesthetic beauty but the radiance of perfect being. These dwell "in his sanctuary" (bemiqdash, בְּמִקְדָּשׁ), God's dwelling place—whether the tabernacle/temple or (ultimately) His heavenly throne room.

The verse refutes pagan notions of weak gods requiring human help or ugly idols representing divine power. Israel's God combines strength with beauty, power with holiness. This anticipates John's vision of the heavenly throne room (Revelation 4-5) where God's glory, power, and beauty overwhelm all worshipers. In Christ, believers become God's sanctuary (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19), temples where His strength and beauty dwell.

Historical Context

The Jerusalem temple was designed to reflect God's glory—gold, precious stones, intricate craftsmanship, and the shekinah glory filling the Most Holy Place (1 Kings 8:10-11). Yet Psalm 96 calls all nations to worship, anticipating the gospel age when God's sanctuary wouldn't be localized in Jerusalem but present wherever believers gather (Matthew 18:20) and ultimately encompass new creation (Revelation 21:3, 22). Solomon acknowledged this truth even when dedicating the temple: "the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (1 Kings 8:27).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do strength and beauty together characterize God in ways that neither attribute alone could capture?
2. What does it mean that believers are now God's sanctuary where His strength and beauty dwell?
3. How should worship services reflect the honour, majesty, strength, and beauty of the God being worshiped?

Interlinear Text

תְּהִזְדִּישׁוּ	וְ	תִּפְאֶרֶת	רַתָּה	בְּמִלְאַכְדָּשׁוֹן
Honour	and	majesty	are	before
H1935	H1926		H6440	H5797
				H8597
				H4720

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 50:2 (Parallel theme): Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

Psalms 93:1 (Parallel theme): The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.

Psalms 104:1 (Parallel theme): Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

1 Chronicles 16:27 (Parallel theme): Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place.

Hebrews 1:3 (Parallel theme): Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Psalms 29:9 (Temple): The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.

Psalms 8:1 (Parallel theme): O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Psalms 19:1 (Parallel theme): The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Psalms 27:4 (Temple): One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.